

Keep Your Calendar Booked with the Right Clients All Year Long



Create Your Marketing GPS

Call #2

Sarah: Hi everyone. It's Sarah Petty and I'm here with Erin Verbeck. Welcome to call two of Create your Marketing GPS.

We've talked about the 'S' and the 'P' of the SPIKE formula. So now we're diving into the, 'I' next. That's **Identify and Set Your Budget**.

What I see many photographers doing is they're going along and an opportunity comes at them and they look at the cost. It's \$350. They look in their checking account and if they have \$350, then they say yes. If they don't, they say no that's being very reactive. I know I've been there here and there over the years, but what we found works much better and really this is what Erin and I love to do is put together a budget and then hammer in on the best way to invest that budget where we're going to get the biggest response and the most results.

We're going to fill out the Identify and Set Budget area. It's really simple. I want you to put your projected gross sales on that first line. You should already know that number if you went through the first column, you listened and you worked through that business planning number of how many sessions at what average to get that projected gross sales. I want you to write that number here.

For us for ease we're going to go with the same number we used of \$100,000 gross. That's what we want to bring in this year. Then on that line, I want you to calculate – get your calculate – and write down what 6%, 8%, 10% and 12% of that number are. For us, it's nice and easy - \$6,000, \$8,000, \$10,000 and \$12,000. So we have somewhere between \$6,000 and \$12,000 to bring in that \$100,000 this year.

What I've seen in my years of doing this is after you get really grooving, you typically start out closer to the 12% and after several years you start going down to the 10%, the 8% that sticks. I think I hovered around 6% a lot and sometimes when I wanted a large seniors or large something new, it would go back up. I knew that I would still be

profitable even if I went up to 10 or 12% because I was careful to manage all of my expenses and I knew how to run that part of the business.

Now you kind of have an idea of what your budget is. Erin, do you have any thoughts on budget that you want to add in before we move into the details?

Erin: I do actually. One of the things that we talked about on the first call that you might remember is we talked about when you're adding new niches of business, and that's what Sarah was kind of alluding to here. She went along in the first five years or so of her business and it was all focused on kids and families. She started getting things going there. She had invested heavily in a new birth piece right when she went into business, and it was a piece that she continues to use today from time to time.

She didn't have that new birth promotional piece expense after the first few years, but when she started to add new lines of business that's when she started to add some additional expenses here.

That's one thing you need to keep in mind here, is if you're looking at adding a new line of business here, if you're looking at adding seniors, adding family portraits or adding pets, you need to look at how much money you're expecting to get out of that new line of business. You need to know that if you're expecting to get money out of it, you need to invest in marketing it and setting it up and branding it in a way that positions you as a leader here so that you can get the higher average sale out of that new niche, just like you are in your existing niche.

Sarah: That's what's fun about what we're going to talk about is you'll see how you're making an investment in a piece and you're getting the return this year, but then next year you're still going to have more of that piece and it will continue to get a return but you don't have any expense that ties to it.

Keep that in mind as we're going through the next part, which is 'K' – **Knuckle Down on the Details.**

I don't want you to get overwhelmed in this section. We're going to get down in the weeds. When we started this planning process, we started way up in the clouds and we were looking down at big concepts and goals and what we wanted to accomplish when.

Now, we have to dig down deep into the ground to figure out what do we want to accomplish, how we're going to accomplish it and what's it going to cost? When working on this little potential plan, we have to do a lot of massaging and going back and forth and saying okay, you know what, when we first did it we put in what we really wanted and realized we were spending too much. We need to go trend.

We decided we could increase our response here if we did this or whatever. So it's kind of massaging thing but we're going to walk you through this. You may need to listen to this more than once, and we will provide you with transcripts so that you can highlight and you can take notes. The first time you're listening, just listen. Don't get panicked or start getting caught up in the numbers. Just listen to the concepts that we're saying.

Then you can go back, listen again and sit down and pause and start putting a pencil to the paper of okay, if I did this what would it cost? If your budget is smaller, maybe it will take two or three of these ideas and if your budget is bigger, maybe you'll expand on these ideas. There are so many variables that go into this. My whole philosophy is to start with one great thing and add from there.

We talked about the rocks and the sand and the water the last time, so we're going to kind of go through this and talk through these pieces with you. Let's get started because we have a lot of information to throw at you.

Rock Activities

First we're going to talk about that big rock. We talked about that fall marketing piece, that establishing piece that's going to build your business. I call it fall marketing piece because that's what I do at my studio. Your establishing piece might be mailed to your clients the first time at a different time of year.

For me, I kind of put that in here because I feel like if you don't have any idea of what you're doing and you haven't done this before, that's a really great place to start. The goal of this piece is to drive traffic earlier in so that we don't have those holiday card clients and all those past clients coming in, in December and ruining our lives.

We want to get our good clients in early so that they come in August-September, and then they have time to show their artwork to their friends and they can still come in. When we print this, we print it as our establishing piece, so we want to print it and overrun it so that we have it for two years – maybe three years if it really rocks.

That's where the branding part comes in. This establishes what makes us different so that we can use it all year to stir up business. We talked about that a little bit in the last call as well. The sand activities are where we can take this piece and make all of these things happen.

Action Steps

I want you to start by pulling your really amazing images. This is your dog whistle that calls out to the people in the market who aren't price sensitive. You want to attract them, so this piece has to be amazing. You want your best images.

The ones for me were where kids were laughing or giggling or snuggling. When the mom looks at them, they get goose bumps. Those are the images that I want you to find.

Then you're going to work with a professional graphic designer, and we want you to get a design that rocks the house. This is the kind of thing where templates can be great – and we have templates – but if you take the template, make sure that you customize it to your look and feel, because these things again have to be consistent with your brand and your look and your style and all of those things.

You love and want to sell these images. Sometimes I get asked to do like a typical very traditional posed family group, but you'll never see that anywhere on my site or in my marketing pieces. I show the things that I want to sell. I put them designs that are consistent with what I do and that really show off what I'm doing.

You're going to be doing all of these things kind of back and forth. We start by looking at our database quantity and asking yourselves; how big is my database? For some of you it might be 50 or 100 people, so you have a lot of prospecting to do. You want to add your friends, your family and everyone that you know because it's so important that everybody that knows and cares about you is in the know of what's going on in your business.

They may not be your client or someone that comes and pays you but they love you and they want to see you succeed, so if you put a gorgeous promotional piece in their hand, they can show it at work. It's that dog whistle out there attracting those right people.

If you have a low database, you've got to do some prospecting. Yes you can rent a mailing list of people that have a certain income or things like that, but you can also look at different clusters of lifestyle segments. Maybe you belong to a certain club where a lot of your clients already go to. Find out if you can use that directory. Find out if there are neighborhoods that you have clients.

You can go to the City Directory, which is a reverse listing of neighborhoods, so you don't even have to rent that. You can pay a teenager minimum wage to go type in those addresses for you. You want to find different lists where you feel like there are people who could be your clients and prospects.

As we go through some of these other activities like co-marketing or charitable marketing, if you can use those lists to prospect with that's fantastic. If they're going to endorse you, that's all the better. Sometimes when you don't know anybody or you're new to a city, you don't have a list so you have to start somewhere. The more qualified people you can find the better.

Erin: Sarah, one of the things that you can do for example if you're looking at – we talk about this a lot. If you're looking at growing a high school senior business, start looking in the newspaper. Look at the sports kids. See what the juniors are doing. A lot of times it will say this child – his parents are this. He scored 21 points in the game last night. So and so got this art scholarship.

There's a lot of opportunity there. If you just watch the newspaper, you will see people who are doing well and you can celebrate them and you can collect those names, and then do a reverse lookup in the City Directory to find them – once you've got their parents' names, what their address is – and you can go from there.

Sarah: Yes and we'll talk about that in some of the sand activities for sure, those are things you want to do to always be prospecting. What we do is we typically don't add all of these prospects to our master database. We will mail to them once or twice. I know you hear some people say hit them four, five, six or seven times but when we do it our way where we have a really dynamic piece, we only need to hit them once for the right people to respond.

Then we add them to our list. That's why grows an organic really great list. You're prospecting to a lot of people and when they respond, you add them to your list.

Your three most important things on a marketing and promotional piece are:

- 1. List**
- 2. Offer**
- 3. Creative**

We talked about where to get the list. We haven't talked about what your offer is. Your offer will be – a lot of times we don't make a specific offer. Our offer is more of a call to action of hurry in before we book up for holiday portraits. A lot of times you can do a value-added offer. Come in before September 31st and receive 25 holiday cards.

Giving them something instead of a discount – that's going to attract the right kind of buyers instead of the price-sensitive buyers. What we recommend doing as well with this fall piece or this establishing piece is you don't want to date it – or we don't like to date it. We do this great piece that says we're booking up, call today.

Then we'll put a little tip-in card. We'll print it on vellum at Kinko's or you can work with Marathon Press to print you something on a cheap paper that just slides right in there with each of these different mailings that you do that tells your offer, that creates urgency.

Maybe you do it in the fall and that's your holiday card offer and it says hey, we have 10 slots open on Saturday, September 5th to do holiday portraits. When they're gone, they're gone. There's a minimum investment, so call immediately. So you're creating a reason for people to call and you're doing it right away.

Then the third piece, which is very important in our eyes, is the creative. If you want to attract the right customers and the right consumers, you've got to have a dynamically fantastically creative promotional piece.

What we do is when we're doing it, we have our on-staff designer design something custom but if you went to a designer or an ad agency, it's going to cost you thousands. What I recommend is to start by going to MarathonPress.com and scroll through some of the designs that they have.

What's nice about this is all their printing prices are right there on their website, so you can scroll through and say okay this piece I like, let's go look at pricing. It gives you a ballpark starting place.

If you Google Sarah Petty, at the site you can see a lot of our designs. There are a lot of designers that design for them, so check it out and find one that resonates with you. For example, the one that's on your form here – your little sheet that we gave you. I did this one as a holiday card, which folds and fits in a normal envelope, and then it folds out into this big circle, so you can talk about the circle of life.

The baby's first year could be a piece you do to target new moms and you put all these first year images and you educate your clients on what times they should be photographing that baby during the first year and what products they should purchase. It's just a really great way to start throwing numbers out there so that you can figure out how much is it going to cost and what am I going to get return wise for this?

Budget

Now I'm going to the Budget section. We're estimating 2,500 to print. Offset printing works different than digital. Digital is printed one piece at a time, so your cost for 10 is usually 10 times what it costs you for one. There might be some setup costs but it incremental jumps.

With offset printing, it's very expensive to set up the press, so once you've set up the press the pages are very inexpensive. You could go from 1,000 to 3,000 for sometimes \$50 more. I always say you're eating that cost upfront, so let's get a couple thousand extra. We budgeted 2,500. Your database might be 750. It might be 200 but we're going to prospect so that you can mail 1,500.

I've worked with photographers in the past who were creating all these cool pieces and they were mailing them and they were like we just didn't get a response. I'd say how many did you put out there, and they were like 70.

If you're going to get a response to anything, you've got to get some quantity out there. We base all of our projections on a 1% response. That's kind of where we start. If you mail out 1,500, that would be 15 clients that you could generate. With a really great offer, with a really tight list, with other things you might double that response and you might get 30.

If it's a cheap generic, ugly postcard you're mailing to people, that have no idea who you are, you might not get any response. We look at the better creative is going to increase the response. The better offer will increase the response. The better list will increase the response.

If you have a charity endorsing you and saying come to Sarah Petty Photographer this month, she's going to give her whole session fee to us and we want to raise \$10,000, and they're pumping it on social media and they're calling their people and scheduling sessions for you, think how that kind of thing would increase your response. There is no hard and fast rule other than let's start at a 1% response.

Now if you look at this, we're projecting to invest an estimated \$3,500. Typically we'd want to generate \$35,000 from that. We want a 10 time's return but we're being conservative in our estimates and we also know that we're going to use this piece to get response in all of these other areas.

Sometimes when we initially look at it we say you know what? We're being conservative in our estimation. We might not make our 10 times back but we're going to have this dynamic piece that builds our brand, attracts the right buyers and that we can use for two years to build our business. That's how we justify that piece.

If you're projecting \$35,000 in gross sales this year this is a piece you could use your entire budget for and build your business. That's what I did and that's what I would recommend you do.

Erin, do you have any comment on this first piece?

Erin: I think I just want to reinforce again that I know when you look at this, it looks like it's a large investment and it's a large part of your marketing budget for the year, and that's why it's in the rock section. If you'll remember from the very first call that we had with you, we talked about how without the rocks, the sand and the water activities are much less effective and in some cases no effective at all.

This piece is so important for you in establishing the value of what it is that you do. This is not a place to skimp. This is not a place to do a regular or oversized postcard or, anything that just folds a few times and doesn't really do anything outstanding. This is something where it basically has the effect of jumping out of their mailbox and grabbing them by the hand, and running them into your store or making them pick up the phone to talk to you.

That's what this type of piece does. That's your goal here and that's exactly what you need to do when you're looking at designing this piece again, as Sarah mentioned, this is the piece that you're going to use, not only throughout the year, but for a couple of years in your business. It's something that's going to help establish you and your brand as being worth more than your competition.

Sarah: Also if you look at our average sale this was the average sale we feel like everyone can obtain if they're following our system of selling. If you're having an in-person consultation and you are selling via projection, you should be doing \$1,500. If you're new and you're just starting and you're figuring all these things out, you may be having an \$800 average.

When we get to the end and you look at this and you look at how hard you're working for everything, and you take your \$1,500 average and you make it \$1,600 average, look how much more money you make.

Part of that is the sales plan. Hopefully you've invested in some of our selling education where we teach you that chain-link fence strategy of selling from A-Z so that you can get the average sale that you want. When we're creating this promotional plan, we're kind of going on the assumption that you have that figured out and that that's the average sale that we did in our projecting.

You'll see we've also attached an Excel spreadsheet for you to be looking at these numbers, and when we were putting this plan together, we had to go back and forth and we had to up a few things and we had to lower a few things. We had to say you know what? We need to steal some money from here and put it here or we won't be able to do this. You will probably have to do that as well.

Like I'm saying, we added all these different smaller activities based on the two big investments and those are the most important, so if you do nothing else just do one of these and use that piece to build your business.

We're going to go on the assumption that we're going to launch a senior business for this business that we're working on next year, so our second big rock is to hold a senior event. If you would have done a promotional piece last year and paid for it for your kids/family, you would have that this year to use and your whole budget could go to the senior event.

So maybe you do that for next year – you put your whole budget into the kid/family and your whole budget next year into the senior event or that majority of your budget, leaving some money to do some of these other things in small quantities.

For this event, our goal is to create a huge buzz and drive seniors early in the season to lock them into your business. If you are brand new, this could help you build your portfolio and attract reps, so you've got all these people who love you that are armed going out into the market of high school kids and they're getting them excited about you.

That's what we find. If we can lock these 10 to 15 kids in early in the season, we can double or triple that easily throughout the year because their friends come a month later and then their friends come a month later. Then the next year you can double all of those numbers. It's really a great way to get started by creating this blast early on in the season.

Now let's go back through list, offer, and creative– the three most important things when you're doing a marketing piece – which you would be doing for this event. Seniors are a little different than everyone else because with kid/family business you build a relationship and they stay on your list, which you'll see on your list as a senior as well, but each year you can reinvent yourself.

List

It's a whole new crop of prospects, so you might have to rent a list. Go to StudentList.com and you can get counts in your area. We always start by doing that to find out how many kids are we talking about? In my area, which is a 50-mile radius, we don't go to other markets because we find that there are plenty of kids in our market, but figure out where you want to go and do some testing if you want and get those counts.

It doesn't cost to get counts, so maybe you want to go to outside areas and then you look at this school district is fed by this zip code and that kind of thing, so you give them zip codes and get that count.

If you can get a list from the seniors last year, that list is 10 million times better. You often can't do that and you don't want to get in trouble for doing it, but I'm just telling you that's a lot better list. These student lists are compiled from data where you fill out a new Fisher-Price toy when you're born or whatever, or at kindergarten registration you fill out different things. That information gets sold and it's compiled, so they're following you as a child and compiling this list.

There's a lot of error in that list. They're not getting those lists from the schools. They're making them, so know that there is waste.

Offer

With your offer, what do you want to offer? I find that an ambassador or modeling representative program is phenomenal. Everybody wants to be a model. They come in and they sign up. Some places do it for free. If it's your first time, you might do all these models for free and they make money or they get credits toward their order when they get their friends to sign up.

We're more established and we want to attract the right kids, so they have to buy our largest package and invest in our largest investment. You can do it with anything in between creating your modeling program, but you want to give them incentives and benefits for purchasing, benefits and incentives for referring their friends.

You could tie in with charities. If there's a teen charity, you get on Facebook and in social media and you find out when the kids come in what their charity is and see if you can tie in, and they'll promote it for you. That's a way to get extra promotion.

Your offer could be bring your mom and get certain things like free wallets when you sign up. Bring a friend and get free stuff. You want to create urgency by limiting the time that people can sign up and having limited spots. They might come and they might get a free hair appointment if they sign up that day. That's why you want their mom there because their mom has that buying power. You want to get the mom there, you want to get their friends there and you want that pressure and that excitement. Everyone else is signing up, let's sign up.

Create

The creative again, you're talking to high school kids who are some of the savviest consumers. They're marketed to by Abercrombie and Apple and all these amazing companies, so you can't go out there with a postcard and get them excited about you. You want to engage them. You want to have trivia. You want to do teasers. You want to get them excited.

The piece I'm showing you here is a Christmas card I did. You can find that at MarathonPress.com, and it spins. I did it for the 12 days of Christmas. Then we designed it for the senior market where we had all these things to engage the seniors. You spin it and you answer questions or that kind of thing.

A couple of years ago you might have seen that we did that shine seeker. It used to be called a Cootie-Catcher. Its square and you fold it up and then you put your fingers and thumbs in it, you pick a color, pick a number and then when they pick they open it and it tells them something funny. So anything like that, that engages them to get them to your event.

I'm going to give you 10 quick tips for a successful event because having an event is a really big deal. You want to make sure that it goes off with a success.

1. You want to have a theme. We've done themes like all you need is love. For seniors you want to get something really hip and cool.
2. You want to have your studio or the event location standing so tall – fresh flowers and clean windows. Every detail should be perfect, which includes awesome displays.
3. Tie in with a charitable cause if you can. That will help you generate publicity and get more exposure.
4. Introduce a new product. Go to White House Custom Colour and check out their metal products. Those are so cool. The gallery-wrapped canvasses that their friends can sign on the edge. Cool albums, cool books.

When I first opened my first studio, I wrapped a frame in fur and I teased that. I said you're not going to believe this fur frame. You need to come see it. People were walking and going where's the fur frame? You want to show them that you're creative and you want to entice them with something exciting.

1. You want to have your displays up to date with your favorite clients. If you're doing seniors, you need to get a popular kid from each school and tell them, tease them – you're not going to believe what we have for you and bring all your friends. If you get 15 friends here, I will give it to you. Get them jazzed up.
2. You want to capture the names of everyone who comes in the door, so do a register to win. Give prizes away. Get them excited.
3. You want to have beverages and snacks. Obviously if they're teenagers, no alcoholic beverages. I probably wouldn't even do that for parents. Just always go on the smart side of judgment. If it's kids/family or that kind of thing and its adults coming, we always have wine. Just wine and maybe a few bottles of beer, but nothing crazy. People never overindulge there. Also figure snacks.
4. A free gift for everyone if you can. We're generous. For the seniors you could go to Alternative Apparel. Cool, cool, T-shirt. Order a bunch of those and give those away like crazy. If they're wearing your shirts, they're promoting for you. We've also done cool calendars. We've done a lot of cool things. In fact, you can see the cool calendar we did. I think that's on the Bellagrafica site at Marathon Press.

5. Consider co-marketing. When I had an event next door there was a restaurant and we did little table tents that got out on every table. We have artwork in the store. Everywhere I went for two weeks before the business, I stopped in businesses and gave them free things and I told them about the event.
6. You've got to get your family, your friends and everyone you know there. You've got to create a buzz, so for the senior event I'd get the popular kids to get all of their friends. The kids that baby sit my kids – I would make sure they're there and they bring their friends. You need bodies to make it exciting. Music and chaos.

You want to generate publicity, which in itself I could talk for an hour about that but then you would have no other content. There is an art to generating publicity, everything from writing a press release to calling the media and making sure they know what you have going on. We do have a whole publicity kit if you want in the meaty marketing on our site if you want to learn A-Z on publicity, but for sure don't be afraid to pick up the phone and call the media and get that publicity.

For sure give them an incentive to sign up. They're there, they're excited. Have your calendar out. Let them know that they're going to be buying when they come. They're going to get extra prizes when they do. If they get five friends to sign up with them, their session is free. Get that all figured out and get that event and create that buzz.

Budget

Now when it comes to the budget, we go through and we've got to have food and beverages. If you can promote a local business to make that for you, do it. When I had a home tour at my house, we were doing it for charity and the local bakery donated all the baked goods and they got publicity for it. I'm not afraid to ask for that kind of thing.

New displays, frames, samples – see if you can photograph your house school sitter and use them as a display and trade that out, or get them to pay for it or give them a special price and you can use it for six months. I put some money in the budget if you can find a better way to do it that doesn't cost your budget, do it.

This is an estimation because it depends on if you have to rent a list or you have a list, printing, mailing and all of those things, which piece you pick. You've got to put all of that into your budget.

Maybe you have a contest on social media. That doesn't cost you anything. Maybe you go to the local radio station that reaches the teenagers and you say look, we're doing this event with XYZ charity, and we will put your name on it if you promote it for 10 spots a day for the five days prior to the event, and you get the recognition and you get the credit for it.

We've had them do that and they get jazzed about it. They can promote it on their blog. They can drive people there. They might do a remote for you. They may ask you to kick in a little. Again play with your numbers. If you're just launching a senior business, that could be great for you.

If we're looking at mailing to 2,000 kids, a 1% response would be 20 kids. We tend to estimate conservatively, so we put 13 senior clients but if you get 13 to 20 kids and then they get their friends, they come and then they refer their friends and so on and so on, that number could end up being 25, 35 or 45.

It could end up being a really huge number depending on how great your ambassador program is, depending on how great the radio station does, depending on how great of a buzz you create and the high school kids that get free T-shirts that are working the event, and they get commissioned for signing kids up.

All the things you can do to increase that response is very, very exciting. Again we estimated this at a \$1,200 average, so make sure your bonuses for the seniors start when they invest at what you want them to spend. You need them to spend \$1,200, so that's where your bonuses should start.

If you look at our investment here, this is a little lower projected response than we typically want because we know we're going to leverage this for the whole year and use these kids and our plan to get more kids in.

Erin: I know this seems pretty overwhelming having an event. It's like oh my gosh, especially if you don't even have a studio. It can be a very, very big deal and that's why it's a rock. That's why we have assigned this to the rock piece of your plan.

You do need to realize it's a big deal. You need to make it a big deal. You need to make a huge buzz here. This is a great way to launch a new line of business, or if you're really looking to break through the clutter and do something more exciting that has more engagement than the traditional putting a piece out in the mail, this is a great way to do it.

One of the things too – just one little thing I want to add here in addition. Sarah mentioned making sure that you invite everyone you know – your friends and your family – and make sure they commit and they actually come because it's important that there are people there. One of the things that I encourage you to do is to get a couple of your models or your ambassadors signed up first before you throw an event.

You really need to work your connections here, whether it be the high school, receptionist at the place where get your hair cut. Like Sarah said maybe it's your high school babysitter. Whatever it is you need to get a couple of high school kids committed to this event and showing up with their friends too. Don't just rely on your co-marketing

partner and the radio station and your Press Release and everything else to fill this event. You're going to want to make sure that you've got an in.

For some of you that came into the world of photography from a business-oriented career or a corporate career, you never walk into a meeting and spring an idea on somebody. You're going to have a couple of people in the meeting that know what's going on to begin with. It's the same thing here. You want to make sure you've got some people in there who you've shot that are in the demo that you're going to be marketing to and launching this business to.

Sarah: Exactly. We were talking about this being a senior event, but there are a lot of other reasons to have an event. If you do open a studio, that's the best, most exciting reason to have an event.

If you're partnering with the kids' clothing store next door, that's a great reason to have an event. If you can partner with all the pet businesses, that's a great reason to have an event or the bridal vendors. You invite the best bakery and flower shop and you do a little mini education for all the brides twice a year. What a great reason to have an event.

If you're rebranding and you just came up with a new name, you realized you did it wrong the first time so you have a new name, a new logo. You want everybody to know, so that's a great reason to have an event.

If you're new and you're just getting started, an event is not ready for you and you're not ready for an event, like Erin said. Start with the cool printed establishing piece, get a year or two under your belt and then position yourself to have that event.

Sand Activities

Now we're ready to go through the sand activities. We'll probably go through these a little faster because there are more of them, but we wanted to go a little more in depth with the two rocks because you have to have the rocks first. Even if you only have the budget to do one rock, that's okay. Some of these things you can do very cost effectively and they can stretch your body, so make sure you're listening and taking notes.

Let's get started.

Erin: I wanted to jump in real fast and say again I cannot emphasize this enough. We based the responses on the sand activities that you're going to see here – we based our response rates on these activities based, on the fact that you are going to invest in your brand and invest in an establishing piece to begin with.

The response rates that you see here are things that we're basing off of you investing and building a strong brand and not going in and just kind of half doing things.

Sarah: A very good point, Erin. It's like if you don't do anything else but auctions, nobody knows who you are and you don't have a quality establishing piece and all you do is that auction, you probably won't get the \$1,200 average that you're wanting. You might get a \$200 average. It changes everything, so you have to keep all of those things in mind.

→ **Auctions**

You have this gorgeous establishing piece. I want this to be the piece that sits out at all of these auctions in your community where people who are community minded attend and you attract the best buyer. That's my goal. That will keep qualified leads coming in all year.

Action Steps

When we talk about action steps, I go through these as if you're brand new in a community and you don't even know where to start and you've never done any of these things.

Sometimes I forget some of these details because they're second nature to me, but Erin and I have worked through this together, hopefully getting all of the details written out on paper so that you at least have starting points.

What you want to do is you want to scrape up all the local charities that you can. You want to reach out to them and you want to get on their calendar so that you can make sure that you have an auction at their events.

You start by finding these local charities, private schools, 501(c)(3)s, which are legal nonprofit entities with the government. You can go to your local Chamber of Commerce. You can post on Facebook. You can see what people are talking about. You can Google. You can talk to your friends and find out what charities are you passionate about and where do your kids go to school?

My kids don't go to a private school, and our school has fundraisers. You know the private schools do because they always need more funds, but even now times are tough and schools always need more technology and cameras and all these other things for their classrooms, so there are always fundraisers happening.

You can literally assign this to someone or spend a day calling these schools and saying who's in charge of your fundraiser? When does it happen? They'll say Mary Beth Smith and it happens in March. So you say that's close, so I better call sooner. That's not for a while, so I'm going to start by calling the sooner ones.

You talk to them and say we'd like to be in your auction. You could do a silent auction or you could do the live auction. I know a lot of photographers who really want to establish themselves as a leader and they give something huge to the live auction. They do fewer auctions and they do something where they can make a massive impact. I find that I get a lot of great clients from just doing the blind auction.

The four elements that are important for your display are:

1. You need a wow display.

I mentioned White House's awesome metal products, or maybe you do a giant mounted on canvass, or you could do a framed piece but that's going to probably get damaged. So you have this gorgeous display, maybe a banner or huge banner stand they've set up.

2. Then you want to have a stack of your establishing pieces laying there and then one price menu. Again we do the turnkey – the ones that you get in two days from White House. It's a little price menu. Design it beautifully. Make it very simple.
3. Then you want to have a sheet with directions for the volunteers so that they know how to set up your display and exactly what to do.
4. They have to get that back to you the day after.

If they don't get it back to you right away, it's lost. I had someone lose \$80 in display materials, and I was really ticked. I kind of let them know that we get asked a lot to donate to auctions and at some schools and auctions the people are super easy to work with and they get our stuff back and they don't lose it, but others make it really hard. Unfortunately, we can't be with everyone. We love your school and we want you to continue to get our support, so just get all this stuff back to us. Don't be a jerk about it for sure.

Just make a friend and on a side note, I did run a friend's fundraiser for a very terminally ill child, and I had some local businesses that treated me terrible. One specifically – she even knew me and she was a total jerk. You know what? This person's going from business to business to business saying I was just in such and such business and she was a total jerk.

Remember that. Treat these guys well. You want them to say oh my gosh, Sarah Petty, the girls there were so helpful. They gave me a soda when I was there because it was so hot. I'm going to refer them. Don't forget that every interaction you have with people is a potential referral.

Other Details

I'm just going to go through these.

- Add the contact person to your form. We'll be talking about this in the Evaluate on the third call, but you want to have tracking mechanisms for everything.
- When they pick up, you want their name, their cell phone, their pickup date, their drop back off date. You want to make sure you keep in touch with them. Shoot, I'd even add them to your database. Send them a Christmas card. Build a relationship with them.
- I prefer that you give an amount over a product, so give \$300 versus an 8 x 10 and a session. That may be a \$300 value but people want to know that, or you want to attract the people that are like oh \$300, that will get me towards something versus I'm just going to come and get my 8 x 10 and my session.
- Must call within seven days to validate. This is important because you want to get them to call you so that you can start to sell to them. Build rapport. Get their address information. Find out when they're thinking of having their session. Then put a trigger on your calendar a couple of weeks before when they want their session so that you can call them. Remember, they bid on this because they wanted it. You're not being pushy. You're just helping them.
- You also want to tell the person at the charity that you want the winner's name, so between those two things you should get the name. They can't always get it for you, so I find putting validate within seven days on the certificate gets a better response.
- We put no cash value. We don't want them coming back saying I want my \$300 back. Not valid on past sessions. We don't want them calling and saying I was in four years ago and I want an 8 x 10 from that session. No.
- Put an expiration date. The only reason we put this is because it creates urgency. If it never expires, they will never call.
- We also limit the validation dates because sometimes your sessions – your averages might be lower for auctions.

We worked out a system and ours are rocking, but when I first started they were a little bit slower because we didn't have that chain-link fence sales strategy figured out, so I would make them valid January through July knowing I would be slower during those times. I'm fine having a lower average when I'm slow. I'll work a little harder for my

money. I don't want them calling me in November and placing an \$800 order. In my business that is not good.

Don't be afraid to put those rules. If they call in September and say it's expired and my whole family is in town and you can do it, you can do it. The key is to drive them when you want to drive them.

Budget

I put budget for three displays. I mean this is just a random number. Maybe you just start with one display. We work with really great vendors who work with us. We're not afraid to go to White House Custom Colour and say look, we are doing five new auction displays. Can you work with us? More than likely if it's not fourth quarter, they will do everything they can. They may give you a slight discount. They may do an extra one at no charge.

The more displays you have out there, the more business you're going to get. I have found vendors over the years – and I know you're saying yeah but you're a speaker, but you know what? Even before anybody knew who I was, when I first started working with White House they said what can we do to help you? We want to help you grow your business.

We have framers that do the same and other great vendors that we use that want to help us succeed. Again, if you can get your costs down there, you have money to put other places.

And then expected response, if you can get in 10 auctions and you put all of these restrictions – you get them to validate, you sell to them – you should be able to close five clients at \$1,200. Again to get that \$1,200, you've got to put them into your chain-link fence sales strategy and make sure you're incentivizing them to invest that much, but you should be able to get those five clients at \$1,200 for a \$6,000 response.

→ Charitable Marketing

I mentioned this earlier. Charitable marketing and publicity kind of go together. You want to expose your message to a qualified audience, so you want to partner with a reputable charity who can endorse you. This is in lieu of renting a cold list. It also generates goodwill in your community and it attracts the right kind of buyers who aren't all about price. They want to work business owners, who are community-minded.

Again like we talked about in the auctions go out there, stir it up and find out what charities are in your market. Ronald McDonald House and the hospitals all have charities. There are so many charitable organizations out there that you can get your arms around. If you can find one that you're passionate about, someone in your family has gone

through some kind of cancer, reach out to that charity. My twins were born premature and they were in the NICU at our local hospital, and I created a fund there and I work with them still to raise money.

Find something you're passionate about so that you can tell your story and reach people. Ask on Facebook if you're new to a market what charities are there and who are they passionate about? If you have a client passionate about it, they're going to help spread the word and at auctions they're going to be excited if you donate to this auction as well.

Reach out via letter, via phone call. Make contact. Ask a lot of questions – what can I do? How do you work with local businesses? Build rapport. Make sure that you have a connection with them before you set up a face-to-face meeting. If they're rude and they say things like oh you just want to take advantage of us or anything crazy, you know what? They're not right for you. They should greet you with open arms.

Then set up a meeting and brainstorm how you can work together. I have found that they will have ideas. They have three things they do during the year and you can brainstorm how you can participate.

The goal I would like to get you at is where you can send your establishing piece that you pay for, maybe they can pay for the postage or maybe you can pay for the postage. You give an offer of a session fee during that month or during that day or that event and it gets donated back to them. It creates a buzz and attracts their clients, and it builds your business.

This is a great time to use that call to action where they have to call by a certain date or there are only so many sessions available, and give them a number and see what that charity is willing to do to help you. Will they stir up on their email marketing campaign or in their newsletter? Do they have a VIP list that they would call? A Board of Directors – ask are 20 people you could call who are big donors that you could personally invite to take advantage of this? Man, that's awesome. That could be your whole rock strategy, going to different charities.

You have the piece already. You have the promotional piece. You spend \$500 to \$1,000 mailing it and you get three clients and it pays for itself. I would bet you could get more than three clients but three clients at your average is \$4,500. How sweet is that?

→ **Free Publicity**

After we do that, we want to make sure that we generate free publicity. Free publicity is where you get the media talking about you – the newspaper, the TV stations. The reporters who give the news, when they talk about you it's like they're giving the news. They're telling people how great you are, how generous you are. This builds your business and it also creates value, so your clients that are coming to you are saying well I

pay a little more for Sarah Petty Photography but look at all the things she does for our community.

It creates value for what you're doing. It separates you from all the shoot and burn commodity photographers in your market who are just selling on being cheap and getting CDs out. You're in the news being focused on because of what you're doing with charities and charitable marketing. It's just a great thing that all of you should be doing to increase your budget.

Do you have anything to add there, Erin?

Erin: There's a lot that goes along with publicity, and so we're just kind of glazing over it here. We want it to always be a part of your plan when it comes to getting there in the weeds when it comes to charitable marketing, when it comes to any events that you're having.

Like we said, we understand there's a lot that goes into publicity, and there are more resources that we have when it comes to this. Just make sure you keep it top of mind because it's a way to stretch what you're doing a little bit further and get all the more exposure for it.

Sarah: Yes, exactly, and don't be afraid to call the media. If it's a slow news day and you're doing something for charity, they'll bring their cameras out and talk to you. Always make sure you look good and you're wearing a solid color and that you have makeup with you if you're a female.

→ **Co-Marketing**

Co-marketing is similar to charitable marketing in that what we're trying to do is generate exposure to the clients of other small business owners. We want them to be in your target market, and it's like going to a dinner party. You go to a dinner party with a good friend – say Erin and I are at a dinner party and I go oh my gosh Erin, you have to meet Dave White. He's my insurance guy. He's awesome. You will love him. She's like oh my gosh, I need an insurance guy. I'm going to call him – versus Dave White just sends her a random postcard.

When people endorse you and they introduce you, it will increase your response. It's a warm lead instead of a cold lead. What I want you to do is make a list of all the people with whom you do business and those who do business with you. People you do business with – your dentist, chiropractor, realtor, where do you buy your cars, where do you shop? I'm a big believer in shopping locally so that you can build these relationships. Take time and fill that out – dentists, chiropractor and all those people.

Then I want you to write down people that do business with you, because those people already love you. That's where I want you to start. I have a great realtor client who rents a mailing list every year to mail her promotional piece with my photography all over it. She would be a great one to approach. Every time a client is in and I find out they own a small business. I'm talking business. I'm asking about their business. I'm finding out about seasonality and then I can throw out an idea.

Hey, do you buy gifts for your clients who buy a house from you because I know when I bought my house the lady commissioned a portrait – this was my first house too – and had a painting done of my cute little yellow bungalow, or Cape Cod little house. They say yeah we buy everything from child to this and that.

Then I could say look, what if I gave you a gift certificate to everyone that buys a house over \$150,000 or whatever is a decent priced house in your market, and it looks like you paid for it, so it's a gift from Suzie Smith to her client from Sarah Petty Photography. Oh my God, would she not love that? Think how you're making her look great and giving her business and saving her money from having to buy that, and then she just tells everybody how great you are.

With a retailer, you could say when are your slow times? What if I give your 10 best clients as a thank you at the holidays a gift certificate that brings them to my business for portraits, and then I'll give you those images for your website? Or we can drive traffic back and forth during slow times.

The key is just talking business. If you're at the dentist, you ask about photography. Have you had your kids photographed? PPA Charities does this great promotion with Operation Smile. How would you feel about mailing something to all of your clients to help create a smile - \$240 creates cleft palate surgery in another country.

They're going to be a heck of a lot more receptive when you're there spending money with them than you trying to cold call. Yeah, this is Sarah, I'm a client, I'm a patient and I want to talk to you about this. That could work but when you're there spending money is the perfect time. They're going to be as open as they can to working with you.

Even if you get three small business owners to mail a press printed folded card from White House Custom Colour and you order it in a quantity of 25. They mail a gift certificate to their best clients at the end of the year valid in January or February to you, you give them the images for their website and it's a great deal for everyone. Boom! You get one new client from each – and you may get more than that. I'm just being very conservative– one new client from each - \$4,500.

Erin: I think too Sarah, I know it can be hard when you're sitting in the dentist chair or you're at the chiropractor or you're popping in to get your car fixed at the local dealership, you may not always get to be face to face with the owner but that's okay.

Just talking business and finding out more about charities that they support and things that are important to them as a business. What do you guys do to market? Like you were saying, do you have photos of your child?

Do you have any other tips for how to approach these co-marketing partners without feeling smarmy and without feeling like you're selling them something? I think that's the biggest challenge for people to overcome is feeling confident enough to have the conversation.

Sarah: Yes, when I first started in business I was in cold call sales and it sucks. I'll just be right upfront, it is hard. I always hear photographers say well I walked in and I asked them if they'd want to hang a display and they said no. It's not about that. It's about building relationships and that starts by spending money.

If you need a baby gift, don't get online and buy it from Hannah Anderson. While their stuff is adorable, go to the local boutique and shop there. Compliment their clothing. Ask if you're talking to the owner, which many, many, many times you are. Just introduce yourself.

Say I'm a photography business. I know how hard it is. We teach this sales process. Build rapport. Ask questions. Do a need's analysis. Find out what it is that they're doing that you're doing. Refer them. Say so and so realtor buys baby gifts for all of her clients. Does she happen to shop here? You know what? I'm going to introduce you two.

Just anything you can do to help their business. Do you work with photographers to market your business might be a good question. If they say yes, then be nice about it. That's fine. It's probably their brother-in-law. If not, I'd love to work with you and help you build your business. Can I take some photos for your website, so we can start working together? Do you have kids? I'd love to photograph them to show you what it is we do different and I'm happy to give them to you for your website with photo credit.

You start with the give. You don't go in asking people to marry you. You start by dating, making them feel good, driving traffic to their business, listening, looking for opportunities and sending them referrals. When they see that you care about them, they will start to be willing to do things with you and they'll be excited about it.

Did that help, Erin?

Erin: Absolutely. Let's move onto number five – displays.

Sarah: Erin works with so many of our coaching clients, so that's why I love having her on the call because she knows what questions people are asking and she knows the struggles you're having, so it's a good little mix.

→ Displays

Your goal is to get displays. If you don't have displays, I want you to try to get at least one display soon. It's the same thing. All these things as you see overlap. Your goal when you're co-marketing is to get a display; when you're charitable marketing, get a display.

What happens is it creates value for your business and it adds credibility. When people are at the auction, if they're at a kids' school and they see you there, they may have seen your display at the fancy tailor in your town, or they may have seen your display at their favorite boutique restaurant. They've seen it and nothing called them to action, and so they were there at the auction and they're like oh my God, she's awesome. I'm going to bid on her.

They see your beautiful display. They're not bidding on you because of price. They're bidding on you because they know of you, they respect your brand and they're willing to pay more for you. All these things need to be integrated.

This just plays on the last thing – co-marketing with other businesses – talking to them, seeing if you can photograph their kids. If your clients are business owners, offer a display. You've probably seen the cute photo on my website of the seven little kids and the two parents they put mustaches on.

He's a dentist and I said hey, what do you hang in your dental practice? I said would you have any desire to hang one of these fun images? Oh my gosh, I have a wall. I would hang anything you want to hang there. I'll hang it and I'll hand out your marketing pieces. You give me a stack of whatever you want.

I get that kind of reception from them, so we waited until the White House sale, ordered a huge canvass of that and we're getting it hung up in there. All these clients are coming in and seeing this. Then we work with him and I say let's build loyalty with your clients and do something with Operation Smile because it's going to make them feel great about you as a dentist. Then boom, I have exposure to his clients and we're building together.

I've also looked for opportunities to send people into their business. Go to the display and pick up this. We did a painting of Santa a couple years ago and we released a new painting each year, and I sent them into the kids' clothing store to make their donation and get it. Of course when they're in there, they're going to shop.

Look for opportunities to help them, but the key is you want displays only hanging where people will gush over you. If they're not gushing over you – oh my gosh, Sarah Petty is so awesome, she's so good with kids – then they're not right for you. If you have to twist their arm and bribe them and beg them, it's not worth it. You need them to be a gusher.

When someone is a gusher, I know – hey I'd love to do a display of your kids. Do you know anybody in town that owns a small business? That kind of thing. I'm not opposed to asking for it anywhere. If you get up three displays this year, you will get at least two clients from them. You may get more. It may increase the response of your other things.

Put out your establishing piece there so that you attract the right clients, so it doesn't say this person is cheap because they laid out a postcard. They say whoa, these guys are awesome. I'm coming to them because their stuff is so great.

→ **Speak to groups**

This is a little one. We talk about building your database and using your promotion piece, your establishing piece. Get out there in your market and speak. I'm not talking about what I do – getting on a platform with 1,000 eyeballs starting at me. I'm talking about in your market going to the new mom group at the hospital and talking to them about newborn photography, and playing a slideshow and letting them cry, giving them a onesy with your studio name on it. Collect their names and addresses. Give something away to them.

Go to the high school junior art programs and show them Photoshop things. Look at all these opportunities to speak. Speak to the Rotary. Speak to any group and organization out there. If you have a unique talent like you're a copywriter, go speak to women in communication about how to write a tagline that separates them, and show your photography and explain the importance of a brand and a great headshot.

Get out there and build your database. Give away. This isn't something that costs you much money but I'm telling you every time I've spoken in my market, I've gotten at least one client. Every time. It may not have been for a year or nine months down the road, but every single time I've gotten a client.

→ **Holiday card incentive**

This is what I'm going to tell you that's interesting about this. We originally put this in the budget as a separate mailing, something down and dirty – a folded card or maybe a postcard. There are times in life when you need to use a postcard but they're typically turnkey down and dirty promotions.

This would be one of those times. This would be where I might go through my database and see who hasn't been in and mail them a note even, or whatever but we got to an end and we're like we don't have enough money to do this. We don't have the budget to do this, so what we changed it to was just sliding little inserts.

You print 20 up on a sheet at Kinkos, cut them out and slide this little insert in with your fall establishing piece, giving people an incentive to come in early. It might say something like come in and have a family portrait before the end of August, and we will throw in 25 holiday cards with a purchase of a wall portrait. You're using something you're already doing to drive these people in sooner.

Erin: One of the other things you can do if you're like me, I save my holiday cards that I get from everyone. You know you have certain clients that come in every year and get their holiday cards but maybe they wait until the last minute and they're not in soon enough, or you want to get those good clients in sooner when you're not so rushed and you're not so stressed.

Pull out their holiday card that they sent you last year or pull it off your computer if you still have and just print it, and send it in the mail to them. Send it back to them with a little note on it saying hey, I hope that we can do this again. I had so much fun last year. I have a couple of openings coming up in the next few weeks. How about you come in and let's get going? I have a special promotion going on now too.

I think that could be fun to send them back their original holiday card if you've kept that. If you didn't this year, think about it for next year. Again, ways to cheaply get the word out that it's time to do this. You can do it on social media or you can do it with email marketing but this doesn't have to be a new printed piece that you send out.

Sarah: I agree completely. We do that. We do have 10 or 12 clients that come back regularly for holiday cards. We want to give them special treatment by saying hey, we're starting to book up like crazy and I don't want you to get squished to too late in the season, so call us and we'll get you in. They call. You don't need a discount. You don't need to do things like that. Just get them in.

As you see, we put a lower price for these clients because you could do a Saturday. Get them all in on one day. Maybe some of them only want holiday cards, which I'm fine with if they come earlier in the year. I don't want a lower than average order in October, November or December but if they come in July and we can handle them, let's do it.

→ **Your holiday card**

This is huge. If you're telling people you're a creative dynamic photographer, you've got to show them. You can't just tell them. You've got to show them. I want you to create a dynamite dynamic amazing holiday card.

We like to get ours out right after Thanksgiving or even sometimes before so that when people have those holiday cards in the weekends in December, they are showing off our card. Look at these. You're not going to believe this.

I'll tell you what, if you want to charge what you're worth and you want people to come to you for your photography because of your create genius, you've got to show them. Play with this budget. I mean this bring referrals. This will bring you the right clients. We didn't put an exact response to this because they're not going to get your holiday card and call. Sometimes they do but this is a branding thing, a positioning thing and a way to generate referrals from your great clients going into the slow season.

Erin: This is an opportunity here for you, as Sarah mentioned, to really shine and to really show off how creative you are. Every year our Café Joy members get the holiday card that Sarah used from the year prior – the template of that. We actually just take it and use it and take it to Marathon Press and print it, so you always have that option.

If you're more creative and you want to design something unique for yourself – we had a coaching client this year that had her little boys make cookies at a photo shoot event, and then she included the recipe and a cookie in a mailing to all of her best clients. Of course she sent the pretty ones that she had made and then they ate the ones that the little boys made.

It was so fun and it was so cute, and you could see her engaging with her little boys and the fun activity that they had, and her getting in with her boys making those cookies. You can do this many ways, but doing the same type of card that you do for your client or something, you know, moms out there are so creative they're doing really cool things themselves right now. This is really an opportunity for you to shine and do something really creative here, to help grow and build your business and position you as somebody who is different and who does some really cool stuff.

Sarah: Yes, so moving to number nine.

→ **Gifting your best clients**

I feel very strongly that this is something all of you should be doing as well. Eighty percent of our business comes from 20% of our clients. If you track back where all your clients come from – from referrals – they all are coming from a small number of people. People that are investing the most are the ones who should get a little extra love like you treat your really good friends.

What we do at the end of the year is we pull up SuccessWare and we pull a ranker of what people have invested with us. We take the top 20% or anyone who's invested over our average – sometimes that's more than 20% and we're good with that – and we do something special for them.

We've sent bundled notecards from White House. We've sent little baby gallery wrapped canvasses from White House. We've sent little leaded glass ornaments from a local artist, and I gave you her email – nataliedesigns1@aol.com. They're 10 to 15 a box. Very affordable and they get a wow.

It's not just about putting something extra in with their order. It's about months later they get this unexpected gift. If you celebrate Christmas and your clients celebrate Christmas, each year when they pull out those ornaments to decorate their tree, they're reminded of the emotional attachment to those images and how their child has changed or their family has changed.

This doesn't take a lot of budget but again it's a branding thing. It gets you to be able to charge more, it encourages your good clients to refer you and it creates loyalty. This is how you keep them coming back year after year because they love you.

Erin: I think one key here is to make sure you use your own photography. You are photographer's, so it's not the time to go buy something from the cool new store that opened around the corner, which you may be doing co-marketing things with. Their stuff may be great, but that's separate.

What you're doing here when you're gifting your best clients is you are using your own photography. It's great to do something that you don't sell so that it's not something that they can just buy off your price menu or that they see on your price menu that they could buy anyway. It's something that you're doing that's a little creative, different and not something they can purchase on their own.

Sarah: Very good point. That's what makes that special, signed with a personal note. Just like a friend. You're treating these people like a friend.

→ **Targeted direct mail**

What we're talking about here – Erin kind of mentioned it briefly when we were up in that rock where we were talking about the establishing piece. You have a big stack of these establishing pieces. Every week you can find people to send these to one at a time with a little note. Stick a notecard in there.

You see people in the newspaper or you run into someone you know in a store, write notes. Send establishing pieces. I did that new birth piece and you can see it at Marathon Press. I did this new birth piece that folded out four times, it had four inserts and every week I would look up in the newspaper where they printed people that had their babies, and I would pull that out of the newspaper and every two or three weeks I would sit down and look them up.

This was back before I had an employee. I mean I was doing all this myself, and I would mail to them with a note that just said congratulations on your new bundle of joy. People would flock in – the right people – because it was an expensive piece, so it looked like I was expensive and it drew the people to me who were not price sensitive.

Then July-December when I got busy, I would hold them and I would look them up and I would send them in January. That got me through my first four or five winters – just that alone – and I loved it.

Keep your antennas up. People are promoted – send them a note with a headshot offer even if you want. I didn't really want this to be super salesy but get them excited and reward them and thank them. Think of all the high school seniors. How many personal notes do they get from leading small business owners telling them congratulations for being in the paper? They don't, and maybe if they're freshmen you could say when you're a junior, we always look for models who set a high standard and who are leaders, so we'll save a spot for you or something like that.

Just give a lot of lot of love because that love you put out into the market comes back at you. My goal with this is that when you wake up some month and you've been a photographer and you look up and you're like oh man, I don't have any business, I don't know what's coming up or what's going on, you always have this. You can always stir it up with this.

If you don't have an establishing piece, you're at a way big disadvantage. Yes you can do notecards. I'm always a fan of that but that establishing piece just separates you from everyone else and it builds a brand.

My goal with that new birth piece was just to build my brand and obviously attract clients, but after about six months of doing it I was moving. I put my house on the market for sale by owner and I got my family out of there. I'm like I can sell. I'll have the open house.

This girl walked in pushing a stroller and holding a baby and looked at the big giant wall portrait and she goes oh my God, is that a Sarah Petty? It was awkward. I was like yes. It proved that mailing those out was getting a buzz with all the people in my target market. The dog whistle part was attracting me the right clients and the other people were having great respect for the people that came to me because they had a Sarah Petty. You can do that same thing with your establishing piece.

Look, we're going to book two baby clients from that and we're going to book four weddings. This is what made this plan a little tricky was that we had three target markets and only \$100,000 gross, which is really tricky. That's a lot to accomplish with this size of a budget, and really we shouldn't have tried to do that much but I wanted to have all these ideas in here.

Maybe last year you did a cool promotional piece for weddings or you just don't have the budget to do it this year, so you're going to have to do some press printed cards and write some amazing notes. Maybe you send a creative marketing piece in a little box with a piece of candy. You decorate it and you make it really cool. You've got to do that for mailing something really cool to your target market.

What you could do with that establishing piece is do a generic cover using that new birth concept that I did, and then the four inserts tell each target market – one that's cool for seniors, one that's cool for weddings, one that's cool for babies and one that's maybe families. It would be a strategic design challenge and you want to make sure you use a great designer to do, but then you have this promotional piece for different categories.

I prefer you not do one piece and put everything in it because you want your target market to know that you specialize in what they do. Erin, do you have any thoughts on that?

Erin: No, I'm good. Again, these are recycling things that you already have but always keep that radar up it's not a huge place here where you need to invest a ton of money.

Sarah: Those weddings will be booked because of all the other things you're doing and the relationships you have and the fact that the weddings you did last year, you got all the bridesmaids' names and you're keeping in touch with them on social media, paying attention to their relationships and writing those notes.

→ **Referral program**

We put this in here for you wedding photographers. Getting those right weddings – a big part of it is getting those vendors to refer you. The right florist, the wedding planner, the church, the bakeries, and I get that we're pretty high up on the food chain and that they pick the location, they pick the venue and they pick the photographer pretty quick but not everybody does.

Sometimes their best friend is the baker, so they go there first and the baker is like, you've got to go to XYZ photographer. You will love them and they'll take care of you. Make a list of all those vendors in your market and we're going to target them. You want to make sure that you have a relationship with them, so when you do a wedding at a beautiful venue and they have all the right vendors there, make sure you're getting the gorgeous shots of the flowers, of the cake and of everything and then do something great for them.

Do a little mini book. Do all these things. Maybe if it's a slow time, you could go to White House or your new lab or your lab and say look, I'm doing all these things and I want to do this many books. Will you work with me? They will work with you, and then give those to the vendors so that they can show off their flowers to their prospective brides, and of

course it shows off your photography and of course you love them because they don't have to take their budget.

Their pictures will be horrible. They take their little point and shoot and click of the flowers and this and that, so you're doing them a huge favor. Remember to get in with the vendors, you want to make sure that you are gifting them and helping them build their business, and they're going to refer you the right wedding clients.

Again this \$5,000 is just a random number based on a hypothetical business, but you need to look at your business and make sure you have a plan in place to get the averages you want. Your averages might be lower or they might be higher, but the plan is using this to accomplish that objective.

Erin: Okay, I know we went through a ton of ideas here. Now it's your turn. We want you to go back and get out your calendar from day one, from the first call on day one where we asked you to list out all the ideas that you have and things you want to do this year.

We know there are things that you want to do that we didn't talk about today and that we didn't get into the nitty-gritty on, but this is a start. We wanted to be able to show you the main things that we have done over the years, that Sarah has done in Sarah Petty Photography to grow her business.

This isn't about running Google AdWords and putting ads on Facebook. This is about other things that you can be doing, so go back and pull out that calendar from day one where you made a list of all the things that you wanted to do. You need to start going through those and just like we did on these pulling together costs of what it's going to look like to have a profitable business.

Again you don't have to do these exact 10 things that we talked about. Your rocks may look completely different than ours, but you need to go into these kinds of questions and types of detail, in order to put together a plan and a budget.

Sarah: Yes and as you notice, we didn't really go into water activities because they're not going to take your budget. They just suck your time, and if you are doing all of these things, your water activities fold in there. We kind of mentioned them throughout – get on social media, promote your charitable marketing events and write the notes to all of your clients. All the time you're filling in during slow times – writing, writing, writing; prospecting, prospecting, prospecting – adding to the database.

Erin: Your water items are a lot of things. They do go on your calendar, it's the monthly networking meetings you go to or the blog posts that you write and it's the picking up the phone when you notice that a great client just did something awesome and they've been in the newspaper. It's those types of things.

If you notice that you aren't good at these things, if you're not good at follow up – because that's really what the water activities are. They're going out and putting yourself out there, and if you know that you're not good at those, then you need to set goals for yourself and you need to say I'm going to do one blog post a month or two blog posts a month. I'm going to attend six networking meetings this year. I'm going to put myself out there and I'm going to do these things. I'm going to stop by and put it on my calendar to shop locally a couple of times a month.

If you need those things on your calendar, then put them on your calendar. Today we were talking about budgeting and putting those big rocks and that sand in your calendar because those things need your money, the most resource, and if you don't make room for them they're not going to happen.

Sarah: Exactly. I know some of you, your heads may be spinning and I'm proud of you for being here through this whole thing because now you're getting an idea of our thought process going through this planning.

If you want to look at the spreadsheet that we've included, it's got two tabs. If you look at the very bottom, you'll see the first tab says GPS Plan and the second tab says Budget. Now you can sit and work with these different little spreadsheets to come up with your plan.

On the left you'd put your activities – I'm going to do a fall direct mail piece, a senior event, auctions. Put all of those things. Put the quantity, the average and the total and you play with those numbers until you get the desired amount of gross income that you want to get, the gross sales.

Then we have projection by category. That's where you did the projecting of how many sessions at what average you're going to do. Then on the second tab – Budget – that's where you put in what budget amount you're going to put toward each of these items.

Again we spend hours on this going back and forth. I need more money here? I need more money there? How can I get \$500 more here? Then we go into well can you trade something with a graphic designer to get design paid for? What vendors can you reach out to? How can you do some of the assembly yourself? Talk with your letter shop about the best postage option that saves you in postage.

You keep playing with those numbers to get those big rocks in first and then the sand. We're really excited to have given this information, and I feel like this is some of the best promotional planning information that we've put out there because it's so detailed and its big picture down to the tactical.

On the next call we will be talking about the 'E' in the SPIKE formula – which is **Execute and Evaluate**. We're talking about all the things you do so that at the end of the year, you can say okay this worked well, this part worked, I can do better here, I can do better there. If you're not evaluating what you're doing, you're going to end up not having the good information to make great decisions.

Erin: Not to mention you won't know where to start next year. The way we look at this is the heavy lifting is in getting the first year of your plan done. Next year, then you can look back and can say okay, I see five things that worked great, these three were duds, but I think it was my fault that one of them was a dud, because I picked a charity that had some issues. It wasn't probably exactly the best fit but I really wanted to work with them, but I think I have a better charity to work with this year.

We're going to teach how while you're in it, while you're doing it to keep track and the metrics to look at to judge whether or not something was a success and to keep that tracking all in one place on our next call.

In addition to that on our next call is when you will be submitting your questions for us to answer. Be watching your email. We'll be sending out a request for you to submit your questions for our call a few days before the call actually happens because we have to have time to compile all of those and prepare the answers for you on our third call.

Make sure that you get to work digging into these worksheets that we've sent you today. Listen to the recording a couple of times and be ready with your questions for our third and final call coming up here soon.

Sarah: All I want to just end with is thank you all so much for making this investment in yourself. This is hard stuff but the answers are all here. We want to help you be those photographers that are charging more, the ones that are surviving and not the ones that are panicking and giving a CD for \$150.

So listen to this again if you need to and jot your questions down. The more detailed the question, the better. If you send something like I'm new, what advice do you have? We're not going to be able to help you as much as if you have a very specific question. Good luck with that and we can't wait to talk to you again on call number three.

Thank you.